2.0 INTRODUCTION

The Dakota County and Scott County Highway Departments, the Minnesota Department of Transportation and the Metropolitan Council retained BRW, Inc. to complete the following basic tasks for the County Highway (CH) 42 Corridor Study:

- document existing conditions along the corridor (including land use, travel patterns, traffic operations and safety issues)
- provide forecasts of likely future conditions
- identify any deficiencies
- develop a corridor implementation plan that describes a recommended, prioritized list of roadway, traffic control, transit, pedestrian and land development regulation improvements

2.1 STUDY AREA

The corridor study area includes the following roadway segments:

- CH 42 in Dakota County from Trunk Highway (TH) 55 in Rosemount to the West County line at the corporate boundary between Burnsville and Savage
- CH 42, 17 and 78 in Scott County from the East County line to TH 169

2.2 PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE STUDY

County Highway 42 is basically a multi-lane urban arterial roadway that is an integral component of the Minneapolis/St. Paul Regional road system. CH 42 serves a variety of functions, including:

- it is the only continuous east-west roadway serving travel across central Dakota and northern Scott Counties
- it provides direct connections to all of the major north/south freeways in the area
- it provides access to a number of major regional commercial nodes and to a variety of local retail land uses

CH 42 is functionally classified as a non-freeway principal arterial roadway. Given this classification, the primary function of the roadway is to accommodate the movement of through traffic (traffic that is using the roadway to get to a destination somewhere outside of the corridor). However, the intensity of the adjacent commercial development has created a demand for land access and controlled intersections to facilitate ingress and egress. This level of commercial development has generated large traffic volumes that have resulted in concerns regarding traffic operations characteristics (average travel speed and intersection delay) and the frequency of access has resulted in concerns relative to motorist safety.

The conflict between the competing functions of CH 42 has created a dilemma for the road authorities responsible for operations and safety along the roadway and the local units of government who are responsible for regulating land development. There is often pressure to provide high levels of accessibility to the roadway in order to support area business development. However, there is a wealth of research that indicates high levels of accessibility are directly related to inefficient traffic operations and increased crash rates.

Therefore, the purpose of the study is to take a comprehensive look at both traffic and land development characteristics in the corridor and actively involve area residents and representatives of the business community to better understand the key issues facing the corridor. Then, after reaching agreement with the study participants relative to the deficiencies in the corridor, develop a plan for the corridor that balances the need for mobility and safety with the need to maintain a reasonable level of accessibility to support area businesses and residents.

It should be noted that this document is an overall blueprint to guide future roadway improvements within the CH 42 Corridor. These blueprint recommendations are to meet the goals and objectives developed during the study process. As individual projects are considered for implementation by state, county or local jurisdictions, the results of this study will be supplemented with additional data and analysis to support detailed project planning and design as needed. Actual projects will provide opportunities for public and local review. During project development, other options may be identified that meet the mobility and access goals in the CH 42 Corridor.

The sections that follow document the extensive public involvement program, the results of the analyses of both traffic and land use issues, the approach to systematically developing agreement regarding corridor deficiencies and potential solutions and finally the recommended blueprint for the corridor.